

VZCZCXRO9409
OO RUEHDA
DE RUEHAK #1378/01 0741238
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 151238Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3985
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7014
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0043
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 0505
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5162
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 4867
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1486
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFIUU/CDRUSAE IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39OSS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFIUU/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFIUU/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001378

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2006

In Today's Papers

Finance Minister Survives Motion

All papers: On Tuesday, the ruling AK Party government defeated a motion brought by the main opposition CHP against Finance Minister Kemal Unakitan over alleged irregularities and abuse of authority. Unakitan rejected the charges, saying the motion was part of a CHP "slander campaign." The motion was rejected 341 votes to 172. Tuesday's motion was the third the CHP has filed against Unakitan over the last five months. Prime Minister Erdogan had earlier urged his party group to stand firmly behind the finance minister.

Syrian Kurdish Congress in Washington

Aksam, Tercuman, Milliyet: A group of Syrian Kurds opposing the Baath regime, arranged a conference at the US Senate in Washington. In the brochures distributed at the conference, a map of Kurdistan included Ankara, Trabzon and Antalya in its borders. Moreover, a Kurdistan flag which is used by the Kurdish parties in northern Iraq, was placed on the podium. Kurdish opposition leaders expressed their appreciation to President Bush and Secretary Rice for their support for democracy and freedom in the Middle East, and wished for the wind of freedom to blow through Syria as well.

"Armenian Genocide": European Financing of Italian Film/Turkish and Armenian Ambassadors to Discuss Issue on Italian TV

Sabah, Vatan, Yeni Safak: The European Council's movie production company EURIMAGE decided to give financial support to an Italian movie about the so-called Armenian Genocide. Supporting the EURIMAGE production company every year with one million Euro, the Turkish Government reacted to this decision by saying "are we going to support these allegations with our own money?" Due to

Turkey's reaction, Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi stepped in and asked the movie production company to soften the scenario. Sabah correspondent Yasemin Taskin reports from Rome that with the initiative of Turkish Ambassador to Rome Ugur Ziyal, he and Armenian Ambassador Rouben Sugaryan will discuss the Armenian Genocide issue on Italian RAI TV on March 20 at 09.00. Ambassador Ziyal said that one historian from both countries will participate at the program together with the Ambassadors.

Iraqi Turkmen Establish New Organization

Cumhuriyet: The Turkmen Autonomy Organization, founded in Iraq last week under the chairmanship of Dr. Muzaffer Aslan, the Iraqi Presidency Board member for the Turkmen, said it targeted the recognition of the Turkmen as the third main element in Iraq. Aslan said US authorities approved of the formation of the organization, saying it was the Turkmen's legitimate right. A statement by the new organization said Kirkuk was the capital of the autonomous Turkmen region, stressing that the struggle to keep the special status of Kirkuk will continue.

New State Incentives for Private Schools

Radikal: The Education Ministry submitted to parliament a draft bill that envisages financial state assistance worth TL 1,000 (USD 739) to each student attending private schools in Turkey. The ministry will pay half of the interest rates of education bank loans in an effort to support families with children attending private intermediate education institutions. Minority schools in Turkey will also benefit from the new state incentives introduced in the draft law.

ANKARA 00001378 002 OF 003

Commentary on Iran

Writing in mainstream Milliyet, Sami Kohen notes that the Bush administration hopes to change the Ahmedinejad regime by "weakening it and helping the opposition to grow" in what will be "long term psychological war." Noting that this method has work in Eastern Europe, Kohen questions the validity of the approach for Iran: "Reality tells us that the Ahmedinejad regime has more capacity for domestic radicalism and it had the courage to defy the international community."

Kamuran Ozbir, in his column in the nationalist daily Ortadogu, notes that unlike the situation with Iraq, the Bush administration is "avoiding the use of war rhetoric in the case of Iran" and is trying to formulate a "joint rhetoric against Iran with the EU and other allies," as a military strike against Iran will result in "colossal consequences and will not be able to fully eliminate Iranian nuclear capacity."

General Smith in Istanbul

Milliyet, Cumhuriyet: NATO Allied Transformation Commander General Lance Smith told the press in Istanbul that "Multinational Experiment-4" military exercises aimed at improved collective maneuver and better organization. Responding to a question on "Valley of the Wolves-Iraq," General Smith said he did not see the movie. "From what I have heard, I can tell that it is a very good piece of science-fiction," Smith said.

TV Highlights

NTV, 8 AM

Domestic News

- Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said yesterday Turkey had been too late in making nuclear energy investments.

- The Turkish parliament is to pass amnesty for 5100 people who have lost their Turkish nationality for failing to fulfill compulsory military service. Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul had earlier announced that the

government would introduce alternative service for conscientious objectors.

International News

- Israeli troops stormed a Palestinian prison in the West Bank city of Jericho and captured Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader Ahmed Sadat and five others. PFLP vowed to retaliate.

- Prime Minister Erdogan will address the opening of the March 28-29 meeting of the Arab League in Sudan.

- A Serbian court dropped an arrest warrant for the wife of Slobodan Milosevic, clearing the way for her to attend a funeral to be held in Belgrade for former Yugoslav president.

- The lawyers of the outlawed DHKP-C organization have appealed against a Bruges court ruling which had convicted Fehriye Erdal, Dursun Karatas, Zerrin Sari and Akar Ozordulu, DHKP-C members sought by Turkey.

- Financial Times reported two outlawed Iranian Kurdish parties have launched satellite TV stations, joining the five Kurdish-language channels already beamed into Iran.

Economy News

ANKARA 00001378 003 OF 003

- Erdem Basci has been appointed as Central Bank acting governor. Outgoing CB governor, Sureyya Serdengecti called for the preservation of the bank's independence in his farewell speech.

WILSON